

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6866

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 0629

KUWIAT ALSO FOR BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, JO

SUBJECT: JORDAN RECONVENES PRE-RABAT LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT
AND POSTPONES POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY: GOJ ANNOUNCED THAT LEGISLATURE DISSOLVED
IN LATE 1974 IN CONFORMITY WITH RABAT SUMMIT WOULD BE
RECONVENED. MEASURE TAKEN IN ORDER LEGALLY TO POSTPONE
AGAIN ELECTIONS THAT WERE TO BE LIMITED TO EAST BANK,
ALSO IN CONFORMITY WITH RABAT. JORDAN EARLIER HAD
CLEARED THESE MOVES WITH SYRIA, EGYPT, AND PRESUMABLY SAUDI ARABIA,
USING ARGUMENT THAT ELECTIONS LIMITED TO EAST BANK NOW WOULD
HELP LIGITIMIZE FORTHCOMING ISRAELI-SPONSORED MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ON
WEST BANK, WHICH WOULD STRENGTHEN ISRAELI "ANNEXIST"
POSITION THERE. LOCAL RUMOR MILLS ASSUME QUICK
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DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT LIES AHEAD AND THAT NEW

CABINET IN THE OFFING. END SUMMARY.

2. LOCAL PRESS ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 3 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT INCLUDES EAST AND WEST BANK REPRESENTATIVES AND THAT WAS DISSOLVED BY KING HUSSEIN NOVEMBER 23, 1974 FOLLOWING RABAT RESOLUTIONS WILL BE RE-INSTALLED IN NEAR FUTURE. PREPARATORY TO REINSTALLATION, KING HUSSEIN FEBRUARY 4 SCHEDULED TO PRESIDE OVER MEETING ATTENDED BY PREMIER, PRESIDENT OF SENATE, CABINET MEMBERS, MEMBERS OF LOWER HOUSE, AND "OTHER SENIOR NOTABLES." PRESS RUTHER ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 4 THAT SENATE AND HOUSE WILL MEET FEBRUARY 5 "TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION WHICH WILL EMPOWER THE KING TO POSTPONE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AGAIN DUE TO THE EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES STILL PREVAILING IN THE COUNTRY ...," A DECISION APPROVED IN SPECIAL CABINET MEETING FEBRUARY 3. KING, HOWEVER, HAS JUMPED THE GUN SLIGHTLY BY ISSUING ROYAL DECREE FEB 4 WHICH POSTPONES ELECTIONS FOR UNSPECIFIED TIME.

3. MOVES NECESSITATED BY FACT THAT ROYAL DECREE ISSUED IN MARCH, 1975 POSTPONED ELECTIONS FOR LOWER HOUSE UP TO ONE YEAR, BY WHICH TIME-MARCH, 1976-- EITHER NEW ELECTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE HELD OR FORMER HOUSE WOULD HAVE TO BE RECONVENED, ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 76 OF THE CONSTITUTION. UPPER HOUSE-- SENATE-- WAS NOT DISSOLVED WITH HOUSE OF REPS IN NOVEMBER, 1974. KING CHOSE INSTEAD TO APPOINT NEW EAST-BANK-WEIGHTED SENATE ON DECEMBER 1, 1974.

4. LOCAL PRESS HAS CARRIED EDITORIALS AND STATEMENTS FROM WEST BANK NOTABLES APPROVING KING'S MOVE TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS WHICH, THEY STATE, OTHERWISE WOULD MEAN ABANDONMENT OF WEST BANK. (NABLUS REP AL-FARIS: "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS SHOULD NOT BE CONDUCTED ON THE EAST BANK ALONE; SHOULD THAT OCCUR, GOD FORBID, THEN A PERMANENT SEPARATION OF THE TWO BANKS WOULD RESULT, AND THE ISRAELI WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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PERMITTED.. TO IMPLEMENT HER SELF-RULE SCHEMES.") GOJ-SPONSORED DAILY AR-RAY STRESSED THREE THEMES EDITORIALLY: ADHERENCE TO JORDANIAN CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES, CONCERN ABOUT WEST BANK CONSIDERATIONS, AND, WITH AN EYE TO RABAT, ASSURANCE THAT "THESE MEASURES DO NOT IMPLY A RETRACTION OF ANY ARAB OR INTERNATIONAL RESOLUTIONS. ON THE CONTRARY, SUCH STEPS ARE MEANT TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THESE RESOLUTIONS."

5. LOCAL RUMOR MILLS ARE SPREADING THE WORD THAT A NEW CABINET WILL BE FORMED IN NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS AND THAT IMMINENT DISOLUTION OF LOWER HOUSE, A LA 1974, IS INEVITABLE. UNINFORMED SPECULATION ON LENGTH OF TIME HOUSE MIGHT REMAIN DISSOLVED IS CURRENTLY RANGING FROM ONE TO FIVE YEARS.

6. COMMENT: AS EMBASSY LEARNED PRIVATELY AND REPORTED BEFORE, RECONVOCAION OF OLD LEGISLATURE IS PART OF SCENARIO KING HUSSEIN AND PRIME MINISTER RIFAI DECIDED ON TO AVOID NECESSITY OF HOLDING ELECTIONS IN JORDAN ELIMINATING WEST BANK REPRESENTATION. GOJ HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO AVOID POSSIBLE ARAB CHARGES THAT ELECTION POSTPONEMENT VIOLATES SPIRIT OF RABAT SUMMIT, UNDER WHICH KING HUSSEIN INDICATED HE WOULD HOLD NEW ELECTIONS ELIMINATING WEST BANK REPRESENTATION (50 PERCENT OF MEMBERSHIP) IN JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT. JORDANIANS HAVE PRESENTED ARGUMENT TO SYRIANS, EGYPTIANS, AND PRESUMABLY SAUDIS THAT, EVEN THOUGH THIS CHANGE IS CONTRARY TO JORDAN'S ORIGINAL RABAT PLEDGE, IT IS ACCEPTABLE BECAUSE IT COUNTERS CURRENT ISRAELI MOVES ON THE WEST BANK. JORDANIANS ARGUE THAT HOLDING JORDANIAN ELECTIONS LIMITED ONLY TO EAST BANK NOW WOULD TEND TO GIVE CERTAIN LEGITIMACY TO FORTHCOMING ISRAELI-SPONSORED WEST BANK MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, WHICH WOULD STRENGTHEN THE ISRAELI "ANNEXIST" POSITION ON THE WEST BANK. JORDANIANS APPEAR TO HAVE SOLD THIS ARGUMENT UP TILL NOW TO OTHER ARAB STATES WHOM THEY CONSULTED, ALTHOUGH UNDOUBTEDLY EVERYONE REALIZES THAT ADDITIONAL JORDANIAN MOTIVATION IS TO KEEP ITS FOOT IN THE WEST BANK DOOR IN VIEW OF CURRENT FLUID STATE OF THAT ISSUE. END COMMENT.
PICKERING

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